



May 27, 2014

KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-14-23

SUBJECT: LTP—Environmental Quality Incentives Program—Fiscal Year 2014 National Water Quality Initiative

Action required by: June 20, 2014 (Field Offices [FOs])

Action required by: July 18, 2014 (Area Offices [AOs])

Action required by: June 6, 2014 (State Office [SO])

Purpose. To provide guidance for administering the fiscal year (FY) 2014 National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Expiration Date. September 30, 2015

Explanation. NWQI funding will be used to assist producers with addressing high-priority water resource concerns in small watersheds. The NWQI will accelerate efforts to improve water quality in hydrologic unit code (HUC) 12-digit watersheds with targeted waters emphasizing treatment of nutrient, sediment, and pathogen concerns.

Approved Watersheds

To advance implementation progress in an accelerated manner, states were encouraged through National Bulletin 300-13-16 to continue work in the FY2012 selected watersheds. After consultation with state partners, Kansas has chosen to continue focus of NWQI funds in these same high priority watersheds. Funding will be used to treat resource concerns in the following approved HUC 12-digit watersheds in Kansas (see Attachment 3).

- Big Creek Watershed (Ellis County)
- Emma Creek Watershed—2 HUCs (Harvey, Marion, and McPherson Counties)
- Grasshopper Creek Watershed (Atchison, Brown, and Jackson Counties)

The allocation for the NWQI in Kansas will be distributed evenly between the three watersheds. The allocation amount is provided in bulletin KS300-14-17.

These watersheds were approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) national headquarters (NHQ) in FY2012 and were recommended by the Kansas Department of

(more)

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Health and Environment (KDHE), the Kansas Water Office (KWO), and the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Conservation (KDA-DOC); and concurred by the Kansas Technical Committee (KTC) and the state conservationist (STC). An additional HUC 12 for the Emma Creek Watershed was approved by NRCS for FY2014 as recommended by the same partners.

Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool

- A. **Program Contracts System (ProTracts) Subaccounts:** A separate fund code has been developed in ProTracts for each watershed with an account type of “National Water Quality.”
- B. **Approved Land Uses and Resource Concerns** (see Attachment 1A): Discussions with potential program applicants should emphasize conservation planning that reflects conservation practices (CPs) to address the primary resource concerns. Applications must have a primary resource concern before a secondary resource concern can be treated.
- C. **Approved Core and Supporting CPs:** FOs are responsible for the planning of core and supporting CPs with the approved resource concerns in ProTracts Application Evaluation Ranking Tool (AERT), as indicated in Attachment 1B. The application must include a core CP.

FOs are also responsible for using a “system approach” in conservation planning that incorporates selection of CPs which address the concept of “avoiding, controlling, or trapping” (ACT) pollutants. This ACT pollutants system approach is explained in Attachment 1A along with designations showing which CPs address which aspects of ACT.

- D. **Screening Criteria:** FOs must utilize the national screening criteria as provided in Attachment 4 to support NWQI to manage workload associated with application evaluation and ranking. Use of this screening worksheet is required and all eligible applications must have an assigned priority of “High,” “Medium,” or “Low” recorded in ProTracts.
- E. **State and Local Ranking Criteria:** State and local criteria have been established as shown in Attachment 2. Guidance issued in Bulletin KS300-14-16 will be used to answer national priority questions.
- F. **Conservation Programs Geospatial Information System Interface (CPGI) Tool:** Some of the ProTracts ranking tool questions require the use of geospatial data. All eligible applications will be evaluated using CPGI. The application number in CPGI will match the application number from ProTracts.

Deadlines

Although applications for EQIP are accepted continuously, the FY2014 application evaluation period cutoff date of April 18, 2014, for the NWQI applications was set. All applications received by that date were entered in ProTracts on April 23, 2014.

FOs have completed conservation plans and application rankings on May 16, 2014.

AOs completed peer reviews of rankings on May 23, 2014.

The SO Programs Staff will make funding decisions by June 6, 2014.

FOs will have all approved applications and documentation entered in electronic contracts (eContracts) for second level review by June 20, 2014.

Assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO) will ensure that all contracts have been obligated in ProTracts by July 18, 2014.

The regional conservationist shall review and obligate all approved applications of \$150,000 or greater as outlined in Bulletin KS300-14-41. The assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO) shall submit questionnaires to the appropriate program manager as soon as possible to meet program deadlines.

Contact: Please forward feedback and questions, through established channels, to Chad G. Volkman, Resource Conservationist, at 785-823-4568 or chad.volkman@ks.usda.gov.

(Signed)

ERIC B. BANKS
State Conservationist

Attachments